

VZCZCXRO6142
PP RUEH DU RUEHMR RUEHRN
DE RUEHLU #0098 0311315
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 311315Z JAN 08
FM AMEMBASSY LUANDA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4582
INFO RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L LUANDA 000098

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/30/2013

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [AO](#)

SUBJECT: LEADER OF NATIONAL ASSEMBLY SAYS GOVERNMENT "NEEDS
MORE TIME"

Classified By: Ambassador Dan Mozena for Reasons 1.5 (B) and (D).

¶1. (C) Summary: Acknowledging that the National Assembly has yet to grow fully into its constitutional role as the primary originating body for legislation, its President, Roberto de Almeida, nevertheless credits the National Assembly for creating a forum that has consolidated peace and reconciliation. During a January 28 call by Ambassador Mozena, de Almeida agreed that the U.S. and Angola share common goals toward a more peaceful, secure, prosperous, healthy, and democratic Angola and Africa. Referring to the September legislative elections, de Almeida predicted the people will give the government more time to continue its reconstruction work, in spite of some impatience with the seemingly slow progress of development. De Almeida welcomed an invitation to lead a group of parliamentarians to the U.S. to observe the U.S. election process. End Summary.

¶2. (C) National Assembly President Roberto de Almeida told Ambassador Mozena during a January 28 call that the MPLA government "needs more time" to meet the needs of the Angolan people. He said Angolans are now more confident in the post-war future of their country, but the confidence has led to impatience over the lack of progress made in public housing, water, energy, education, and health care. While his tone was non-partisan, de Almeida suggested the MPLA would do well in the upcoming elections because voters would understand how hard the government has worked to overcome the obstacles left behind after decades of civil war.

¶3. (C) Responding to a question concerning the legacy left by the long-serving National Assembly, de Almeida told Mozena the legislature brought peace and civil discourse to the people of Angola. He said the National Assembly, after a difficult period post 1992, eventually became a "house that recognizes peace and the need for reconciliation," which he lauded as the Assembly's greatest achievement. Concerning other legislative accomplishments, de Almeida pointed to the Assembly's current work to reform the penal code, which would modernize Angola's colonial laws, which have been unchanged since the early 1900's.

¶4. (U) De Almeida requested U.S. assistance in building a relationship between the National Assembly and the U.S. Congress. Mozena reminded de Almeida that the USG last July had organized a visit to the U.S. for members of the National Assembly through the Voluntary Visitors Program, but the trip was scrubbed at the last moment at the request of the GRA. De Almeida, who was out of the country for medical reasons at the time, seemed unaware of the proposed trip. Mozena offered to organize a new visit for the parliamentarians, and de Almeida readily accepted.

¶5. (C) Comment: The National Assembly is little more than a rubber stamp for legislation written in the Council of Ministers. De Almeida correctly credits the National Assembly with creating a forum where divergent political

views could be expressed and respected ... and vented peacefully. With time, the National Assembly could grow into its role as a meaningful legislative body. September's elections and the infusion of new members could speed welcome changes toward legislative maturity, a process we and other supporters of democratic growth in Angola should nurture to the extent possible.

MOZENA